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Message Text

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ACTION AID-59

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9576
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: AIDCOR
SUBJECT: DAC AND UNCTAD DISCUSSION OF LLDC ISSUES

REF: STATE 45922

1. EMBASSY BELIEVES QUESTIONS CONTAINED PARA 3A. B. AND C. REFTEL NOT RELEVANT TO BOTSWANA LIMITS TO ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY BECAUSE MUCH OF GOB DEVELOPMENT FUNDING DEFLECTED INTO MEETING SECURITY REQUIREMENTS STEMMING FROM WORSENING SITUATION ON RHODESIAN BORDER, BOG IS LOOKING TO DONARS FOR IN-CREASED ASSISTANCE. GIVEN THIS CONSIDERATION PLUS GENERAL EFFECTIVENESS OF GOB DEVELOPMENT COORDINATION, EMBASSY CONSIDERS THAT LIMITS TO BOTSWANA'S ABSORPTIVE CAPACITY WILL NOT LIKELY BE REACHED, PARTICULARLY IF DONORS DO NOT TRY TO GO BEYOND SENSIBLE PROGRAMS FORESEEN BY GOB. TOO, BECAUSE OF GENERALLY EFFICIENT AID-PLANNING, GOB ABLE TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MULTIYEAR PROGRAMMING. BOTSWANA TO DATE HAS NOT HAD PROBLEMS INN FINANCING LOCAL AND RECURRENT BUDGET COSTS; NEVERHELESS, SITUATION COULD CHANGE DEPENDING HOW MUCH IS DEFLECTED TOWARD SECURITY REQUIREMENTS.

2. DURING GENERAL DISCUSSION OF UN FARAH MISSION AND GOB AID PRIORITIES WITH FINMIN PERSEC GAOLATHE AND ECONOMIC PLANNER
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STEVENS, AMB AND EMBOFF TOUCHED ON QUESTIONS CONTAINED PARA 3D REFTEL. GAOLATHE AND STEVESN RESPONDED AS FOLLOWS:

A. HOUSING AND SUPPORT OBLIGATIONS FOR FIELD TECHNICIANS: GOB DID NOT CONSIDER THIS A CONSTRAINT INASMUCH AS HOUSING GENERALLY PROVIDED BY DONORS, TO INCLUDE US. SUPPORT REQUESTS FROM DONORS WERE, TO DATE, MODEST AND THEREFORE, MANAGABLE.

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B. COMPLEX AND TIME CONSUMING DETAILED PROJECT REPORTING OBLI-
GATIONS: ALTHOUGH THESE OBLIGATIONS WERE IN INTEREST OF THE
RECIPIENT, IF NOT TAKEN TO THE EXTREME, THE GOB CONSIDERED THAT ALL
DONORS WERE SOMEWHAT GUILITY OF THIS ABUSE. CONCERNING THE US, THE
BOTZAM ROAD PROGRAM HAD NOT PRODUCED ANY ONOROUS OBLIGATIONS BECAUSE
PROBLEMS WOULD BE HANDLED BY THE ROAD CONSULTANTS. HOWEVER, THE
REPORTING REQUIREMENT VIS-A-VIS THE USAID LIVESTOCK PROGRAM
PROVED "A BIT OF A CONSTRAINT, IN THIS REGARD.

C. UNREALISTIC REQUIREMENTS FOR PROVISION OF MANAGERIAL
OPERATIONS, COUNTERPART OR OTHER SKILLED PERSONNEL FOR PROJECT
PREPARATION AND MANAGEMENT: STEVENS CONSIDERED THAT US AID WENT
"OVERBOARD", E.G, AID WAS "VUNG UP" ON NEED FOR COUNTERPARTS.
HOWEVER, COUNTERPARTS NOT ALWAYS AVAILABLE AND, SOMETIMES, EVEN HAD TO

BE PULLED OFF OF OTHER VALUABLE PROJECTS TO SERVE. RATHER, THE GOB
PREFERRED QUICKER PROJECTS WHICH, WHENEVER NECESSARY, COULD RELY
ON EXPATRIATE ASSISTANCE. TOO, AID OFTEN BLEW PROJECTS OUT OF
PROPORTION TO THE ORIGIANL REQUEST E.G. FOR THE AGRICULTURAL/
PLANNING PROJECT, THE GOB APPROVED A BIT OF TRAINING; INSTEAD
IT GOT A TEAM AND A PROGRAM WITH MOMENTUM OF THEIR OWN TO TUNE OF
SIX MILLION DOLLARS. IT WAS "JUST CRAZY" AND WAS OUT OF BALANCE
WITH THE REQUIREMENTS. IT RAISED QUESTION OF WHETHER IT WAS
WORTH THE EFFORT.

D. WASTEFUL DELAYS IN DEALING WITH A LOCAL DONOR AGENCY
WHICH REQUIRES HEADQUARTERS CLEARANCE. STEVENS CONSIDERED THAT
ALTHOUGH OSARAC AND REDSO DID THEIR BEST TO VISIT BOTSWANA, THERE
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WAS NOT ENOUGH DELEGATION OF AUTHORITY TO PEOPLE IN EMBASSY GAB-
ORONE. IT WAS PERHAPS A GOOD IDEA TO HAVE A REGIONAL OFFICE BUT
MUCH WAS WASTED IF ALL DISCUSSIONS HAD TO GO THROUGH WASHINGTON.
THERE WAS NO POINT TO DECENTRALIZATION UNLESS MORE AUTHORITY WAS
GIVEN TO THE FIELD.

3. IN ADDITION, AID HAD NOT MOVED FAR ENOUGH TOWARD A SUCCESSFUL
MULTIYEAR PROGRAM BASIS. IT WAS HARD FOR THE GOB TO PLAN PROJECTS IN
A LOGICAL WAY, E.G. LIVESTOCK AND NURSES TRAINING. THE GOB HAD TO
DISCUSS 1979 PROJECTS BUT HAD NO IDEA OF APPROXIMATE LEVEL OF
PROJECTS WHICH THE US COULD ACCEPT FOR THAT TIME.

IN THE AREA OF PROCUREMENT REQUIRED, POLICY OF DRAWING EITHER ON THE
US OR THE THIRD WORLD COST MONEY AND TIME. BEST WAY OF GETTING
SUPPLIES QUICKLY WAS FROM SOUTH AFRICA, IN GENERAL STEVENS CON-
SIDERED THAT AID "WITH ITS PIDS, PPS, ETC.," WAS IN BAD
NEED OF STREAMLING.

COMMENT: VIEWS EXPRESSED BY GAOLATHE AND STEVENS HAVE BEEN

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ECHOED BY OTHER GOVERNMENT AND DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUES AND,
WE BELIEVE, ARE A SINCERE AND ACCURATE REFLECTION OF THE AID
SITUATION IN BOTSWANA. WE BELIEVE THAT US AID IN BOTSWANA NEEDS
IMPROVEMENT IN THREE PROBLEM AREAS: (1) WHAT IS SEEN BY GOB AS
USG TENDENCY TO TELL THEM WHAT THEY NEED WHEN THEY KNOW WHAT THEY
NEED; (2) LACK OF USG RESPONSIVENESS OWING TO TIME CONSUMING
PREPARATION OF PREPROJECT STUDIES AND PAPERS (3) SEEMING INABILITY OF
AID, WHEN REQUIRED BY EVENTSS TO MEET CRITICAL AND SHORT TERM
AND MID TERM CAPITAL PROJECTS, SUCH AS THOSE WHICH WILL UNDOUBTEDLY
BE NAMED IN THE FARAH MISSION REPORT E.G. ANIMAL HEALTH CONTROL
FENCE, CONSTRUCTION OF STRATEGIC GRAIN RESERVE STORAGE FACILITIES,
AND EXPANSION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL BUILDINGS TO HELP
GOB MEET PRESSURES OF REFUGEE FLOOD. IN SHORT, IT SEEMS TO MANY
THAT AID EFFECTIVENESS OFTEN GETS CAUGHT IN THE TOILS OF ITS
OWN BURACRACY. GIVEN FACT THAT BOTSWANA PHYSICALLY LOCATED IN MIDDLE
OF
SOUTHERN AFRICAN STRIFE, CANNOT REMAIN UNAFFECTED BY DISRPUTIVE
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EVENTS WITHOUT ITS BOARDERS, AND IS TARGET OF COMMUNIST BLOC
ATTENTIONS, IT IS CRITICAL THAT US SUPPORT BE VISIBLE, TIMELY AND
EFFECTIVE.
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